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Summary record of the 1333rd meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 29 July 2015, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Grossman

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention (*continued*)

Third periodic report of Slovakia (continued) (CAT/C/SVK/3/Rev.1, CAT/C/SVK/Q/3/Add.1 and Add.2)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Slovakia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **The Chairperson** invited the delegation to reply to the questions put by the Committee members at the 1330th meeting.

3. **Mr. Kadlečík** (Slovakia), with regard to the definition of torture in Slovak law, said that article 420 of the Criminal Code criminalized torture and other inhuman or cruel treatment. That article had been amended in 2009 to make the public authorities responsible for or acquiescent in torture equally liable to prosecution. As for the issue of including the element of discrimination in the definition of torture, he said that the law against torture was applied without discrimination to any perpetrators. Discrimination in general was already prohibited by the Constitution and the anti-discrimination law of 2004. The State party was of the opinion that, while not identical to the definition of torture in article 1 of the Convention, the relevant provisions in Slovak law were compatible with that definition. He noted that the delegation could not provide information on the number of victims of torture and prosecutions disaggregated by ethnicity because such statistics were no longer collected in the light of concerns raised by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination relating to racial and ethnic identification and stereotyping.

4. He said that the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights had been established by Act No. 308/1993. It was an independent legal entity funded from the State budget as well as by donations from domestic and foreign individuals and legal entities. The State party would consider increasing the budget of the Centre. The Centre currently had B status accreditation under the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles) and amendments were planned, in consultation with the United Nations and in the light of the Paris Principles, to broaden its mandate, for example its monitoring and coordination role, in the context of preparations for the Slovak Presidency of the European Council in 2016. Responsibility for human rights issues would be transferred to the Ministry of Justice effective December 2015. That would strengthen cooperation between the Ministry and the Centre.

5. The State party continued to strengthen its legislation concerning the prevention of racism, homophobia, extremism and religious and other forms of intolerance, which were regarded as aggravating circumstances in criminal acts. Article 140 of the Criminal Code provided for the prosecution of racially motivated crimes and crimes of extremism, while article 122 added the category of public events motivated by extremism. He noted that a recent development in cases of domestic violence had been to require some perpetrators to wear electronic monitoring bracelets, which would prevent them from trying to contact their victims.

6. **Mr. Mirek** (Slovakia) said that the police force was regulated by the Police Force Act, No. 171/1993; police officers were also liable to prosecution under the Criminal Code if they committed a crime. He stressed that the police were required to inform anyone detained or charged of their rights, which included representation by an attorney; an attorney would be appointed if the individual could not pay for one. Legal counsel was required once a formal charge was laid, for individuals of limited legal capacity, for serious crimes and for cases involving a juvenile. Preliminary detention

was for a maximum of 48 hours, following which the individual must be freed or remanded in custody by a judge. The detainee had the right to notify a family member or lawyer of his detention.

7. Detainees had the right to medical attention if necessary. The police were able to provide basic first aid and would transport detainees requiring medical attention to the nearest medical facility to be seen by the on-call medical staff; they could not choose the doctor or facility. Police were not generally present during medical examinations unless so requested by the medical personnel for safety reasons. Photographic and other images as well as medical reports from examinations and medical information provided by the detainee, were admissible in the courts. Medical personnel had full responsibility for decisions relating to the health care of detainees.

8. Video recording of police activities was already being introduced: 780 police vehicles currently had recording equipment and tests were under way of personal recording equipment worn by officers. Cameras had been installed in police facilities to monitor doors, halls and cells; monitoring would be extended to administrative and other areas as more funds were allocated. Such measures would help eliminate corruption and prevent abuses. Prosecutors were responsible for supervising surveillance in police premises and could make unannounced inspections and order changes where problems were detected. Video and recorded evidence could be presented to the courts, which ruled on admissibility. He noted that forced confessions were not admissible in the courts. As for the handcuffing of prisoners to objects, he said that such incidents were rare and only occurred in the case of particularly violent or uncooperative individuals, pending their transfer to a cell.

9. With regard to arrests of Roma children, he said that the police had to detain persons who broke the law, whether or not they were children or Roma. Minors, including Roma, received special treatment: their legal guardian must be notified; they had access to social workers, psychologists and legal counsel; interactions with police on police premises were recorded. Pending trial the minor was released into the custody of his legal guardian. Moreover, the police were working to increase the number of specialists in Roma issues and expand their presence in Roma settlements.

10. **Mr. Sedliak** (Slovakia) said that the preparatory proceedings judge would inform a third party if an individual was detained. The detainee likewise had the right to contact a third party by mail or phone; if he could not afford a phone call or stamps the authorities would pay the costs. Every prisoner had the right to quality health care from the prison medical staff, who were fully independent with regard to medical issues. Detainees had the right to file a complaint if they felt they had not received appropriate care. There were currently 72 medical staff in the prison system, including 11 dentists, 6 psychologists, 4 physicians, 2 neurologists and 1 immunologist. In addition there were 75 external health practitioners working with the prison system. Medical examinations were private and prison personnel were present only if requested by medical staff. Prisoners who could not pay for medical care were entitled to receive care free of charge. Efforts had been under way since 2012 to improve psychological and specialized services for detainees who experienced psychiatric problems or suffered mental or other disabilities. Currently each prison had a staff psychiatrist. In 2014 there had been more than 23,000 psychological consultations. The State party would consider the possibility of giving detainees the right to access an independent doctor of their choice free of charge.

11. Under new rules that had come into effect 1 January 2014, prisoners serving life sentences could progress through the prisoner classification system with the ultimate aim of being placed in the general population. Prisoners serving life sentences were no longer routinely handcuffed; they were subject to individual risk assessments and enjoyed increased access to activities outside their cells as well as more contact with

other inmates. Currently only one prisoner was serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole, his situation was likely to be reviewed in the near future.

12. The current minimum prison cell size was 3.5 m^2, 4 m^2 for women and adolescents. Slovak standards were in conformity with the European Court of Human Rights decision in the *Orchowski v. Poland* and *Trepashkin v. Russia* cases, according to which sizes of 3 to 4 m^2 were acceptable when considered with other aspects, such as time spent outside the cell, basic health requirements and the possibility of using a toilet in private. For prisoners whose movements were restricted, for example those serving life sentences, single occupancy cells were 6.5-9 m^2, while double occupancy cells were 13 to 15 m^2. A reduction in the space per inmate was possible at the discretion of the prison director but only in exceptional circumstances and for a short time, especially if the inmate was restricted to his cell.

13. Roma prisoners received the same treatment as other prisoners, only difference being that they had access to activities that reflected their distinct culture. He noted that the report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment on its visit to Slovakia in September-October 2013 had been positive in its review of the detention conditions for juveniles in Sučany prison. The State party would continue to implement new measures to improve prison conditions in general and ensure more humane treatment of prisoners.

14. **Mr. Matuščovič** (Slovakia), referring to the Police Corps, said that it did not exist as a separate legal entity and therefore did not benefit from its own allocated budget or legal status. It worked under the direction of the Ministry of Interior. The Control and Inspection Service Department reported directly to the Ministry of Interior and enjoyed a status equal to that of the Control Department of the Presidium of the Police Corps. Since 1994, the Control and Inspection Service Department had gradually become more independent from other police force services. It comprised 115 executive members and over 20,000 officers, and worked to uncover and investigate criminal activities committed by members of the Police Corps. The independence of the Department was guaranteed by employing personnel separate from the Police Corps and it was only the prosecution service, which supervised the activities of the Department, which had the power to intervene in its investigative procedures. Throughout its history, the Department had never been prevented by the Ministry of Interior from conducting an investigation.

15. The question of the independence of the Department was currently under discussion in Slovakia in light of a complaint submitted in that regard. The Supreme Court had reviewed the complaint and ruled that the Department had acted in accordance with the requirements and principles governing an effective independent police complaints body, as determined by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The Supreme Court also ruled that existing national legislation complied with the five ECHR principles of effective police complaints investigation: independence, adequacy, promptness, public scrutiny and victim involvement. Finally, the Supreme Court declared that establishing an alternative structure to the current police complaints body was a matter of political will.

16. In reference to the handling of police complaints, there were several ways to file a complaint against police procedures. The Control and Inspection Service Department recorded all complaints from the general public, fully investigated them, and directly sought information on any unlawful police activity. An online complaints form had recently been made available and could be filled out anonymously, which was important in terms of combating police crime.

17. With regard to specific cases, the Control and Inspection Service Department took 10 months to investigate the Košice case. The Department had collected

evidence, which it had then forwarded to the prosecution service with the recommendation to charge the policemen accused of abuse of official authority. Recently, the district court judge had acquitted the 10 policemen on the grounds that the video recording of the incriminated act could not be admitted as a lawfully obtained piece of evidence. Nevertheless, all 10 policemen were discharged from their duties by the Ministry of Interior owing to the breach of their professional code. Two policemen who appealed against the decision won their case and had since been readmitted to the police force. As for the *Moldava nad Badvou* case, the investigation had been complicated by the lack of video recording evidence. Lastly, as regards the Kežmarok case, the police were informed of the alleged crime a year after it had taken place. During the investigation, the petitioners from the settlements in question directly contradicted the statements they had originally made and, as a result, time had to be spent checking the veracity of statements.

18. **Mr. Csémi** (Slovakia) said that, in all procedures pertaining to the investigation of illegal immigration, the police ensured that the rights of foreigners were guaranteed by informing them of their rights in a language that they understood at all stages of the process. During expulsion proceedings, all foreigners were notified of their right to inform their relatives, legal representation and consulate of their situation, which would be done either directly by the person concerned or by the police. Under the new Legal Aid Act, if a foreigner did not have the funds available for legal representation, it would be provided free of charge by a legal aid centre. Foreigners held in detention were repeatedly informed of their rights, as enshrined in legislation, including through pamphlets that had been translated into 26 different languages.

19. Asylum seekers were entitled to legal advice and to contact with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and non-governmental organizations. All foreigners must be guaranteed the opportunity to apply for asylum and to use all available legal instruments, one of the most important of which was the right to appeal against either legal rulings, detention, or the rejection of an asylum application. In response to Mr. Modvig's question on the data available on asylum seekers, the difference in figures was a result of repeat applications and the progress of individual cases over several years. With regard to remedial measures against detention, following a recent amendment to the law, courts were obliged to pronounce a judgement within seven days of receiving an appeal against detention. The deadline had been much longer in the past and, consequently, the latest amendment had significantly strengthened the rights of foreigners. In terms of non-refoulement, current procedures in that regard were more effective than previously. The surrounding circumstances of all non-refoulement cases had to be investigated thoroughly by the police and the right to apply for asylum was not restricted to foreigners even in such cases. Moreover, the State party was legally obliged not to return individuals to a country from which they might subsequently be sent to a territory where they would be at risk.

20. The prevention of human trafficking and assistance to trafficking victims was a priority for Slovakia. Work was conducted with non-governmental organizations and international organizations to provide assistance to victims. At an institutional level, a national reference mechanism was in place and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior acted as the national coordinator for the issue of human trafficking. Furthermore, the Criminal Code had been broadened to encompass provisions from other acts related to the issue of human trafficking. The case involving the forced marriage of Slovakian women in Belgium and Germany was just one example of a trafficking case that had been uncovered and prosecuted. Awareness-raising and training of police officers was also taking place in order to help identify the victims of such crimes.

21. **Ms. Rozborová** (Slovakia), replying to questions concerning violence against women, said that harmonizing domestic legislation with the norms of the Istanbul Convention was a necessary process to be undertaken before the Convention could be ratified. Consequently, a proposed draft of the Act on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence had been submitted for public discussion in 2015. The discussion took place with relevant stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations working in the field of women's rights had participated in the drafting process of the Act. In addition, amendments to other relevant pieces of legislation (Criminal Code, Act on Criminal Judicial Procedure, Act on Offences) had been put forward in order to provide effective support and protection for victims. Such amendments would soon be submitted to the National Council for voting and included the implementation of standardized risk assessment tools by the police force, the right for a victim to choose an investigator of the same gender, and minimal contact between a victim and the perpetrator of domestic violence during questioning and hearings.

22. Regarding the underreporting of cases of gender-based violence, the Ministry of Labour had established a free helpline to support women experiencing such violence. The General Prosecutor's Office had also set up a free helpline and e-mail address, which could be used to report specific cases, which the Office would then refer to the relevant police department. Since the launch of such helplines, women's counselling centres had reported a twofold increase in the number of women registering complaints. The withdrawal of complaints was not permitted under Slovak legislation in cases of domestic violence. Such cases were classified as torture of a close or entrusted person under the Criminal Code and were handled by the Public Prosecutor's Office and later referred to the courts.

23. In 2007-2008, the Ministry of Labour joined in the Council of Europe's Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence. The next Ministry of Labour campaign against gender-based violence would be launched in 2016. Moreover, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign was held annually and a campaign for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention was currently taking place. Other important measures to be noted included the establishment of the Coordinating Methodical Centre for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and the opening of 7 new shelters and 15 counselling centres as of 2016 with the support of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. The total budget allocated for combating violence against women for 2013-2015 amounted to EUR 12,000,000.

24. **Ms. Danová** (Slovakia), referring to the relationship between the Government and the Ombudsperson, said that the Government had to respect the principle of the separation of powers, which prevented it from interfering with the Ombudsperson's mandate. While political leaders and the Ombudsperson might not share the same views on issues, they shared the ultimate goal of respecting human rights. The Office of the Ombudsperson had moved from the outskirts of Bratislava to the city centre and the new premises were much more appropriate.

25. **Mr. Kollár** (Slovakia) said that a reply had not yet been submitted regarding the infringement proceedings initiated by the European Commission against Slovakia on account of the alleged violation of the Race Equality Directive. However, discussions had been held with the European Commission on that matter, although the content could not be shared with the Committee for reasons of confidentiality.

26. The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community in Slovakia was not exposed to any form of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment. The community was recognized as a vulnerable minority and, as such, deserved special protection. A committee had been established for such persons in 2013 and served as an advisory body to the Government. Half the committee was made up of

representatives from the LGBTI community itself, appointed by non-governmental organizations. To enhance the protection of such persons, the Criminal Code had been amended to include crimes motivated by prejudice against an individual's sexual orientation. Consequently, the penalty for committing such a crime was more severe than previously.

27. **Mr. Hero** (Slovakia), responding to the question concerning the judgement of the district court in Prešov on the segregation of Roma children, said that the regional court had upheld the ruling that the primary school in question had violated the principle of equal treatment by placing Roma children in separate classes on the grounds of their ethnicity. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities had offered to cooperate with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport in the development of regulations and guidelines on the education of socially disadvantaged students, with a particular focus on children from marginalized Roma communities, in compliance with domestic and international law. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education had issued educational and organizational instructions for the 2013/14 academic year, which clearly stipulated that all schools and educational establishments must strictly apply the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and segregation and eliminate all forms of exclusion of Roma pupils. A coordination meeting between representatives of municipalities and schools, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities and the NGO EduRoma had been held in February 2013, following which an inclusive education plan had been drafted. A national project to educate teaching staff on the inclusion of Roma communities in mainstream society had been implemented, and the State School Inspectorate and the National Centre for Human Rights had signed a cooperation agreement for the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly children's rights, under which additional efforts were being made to detect and eliminate segregation in education on the basis of ethnicity.

28. The main objectives of the Roma civil guard project were to strengthen local activism and promote community development. The project was being run in 66 towns and municipalities, with a total of 229 patrols. The project aimed to eliminate socio-pathological phenomena, increase public order and security, improve social dialogue between Roma and non-Roma, enhance communication between the police, local authorities, government and the Roma community, strengthen prevention of illegal activity, and provide assistance to a variety of local institutions. The results to date had been positive, as jobs had been created for unemployed Roma, while law and order had improved. The Roma guards were well regarded by their communities and often played the role of mediators.

29. **Mr. Modvig** (Country Rapporteur), referring to the differences between the definition of torture under domestic law and that given in the Convention, asked whether severe pain or suffering intentionally inflicted by a police officer for the purpose of discrimination would be defined and punishable as torture. He expressed surprise that the collection of ethnically disaggregated data was prohibited, noting that such statistics could be used to monitor differences in treatment in the criminal justice system and identify vulnerable groups whose rights were more likely to be violated and thus required protective measures. He would be interested to know the time frame for increasing the funding of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights and whether the proposed broadening of its competences would include allowing it to monitor places of detention.

30. Referring to the right to judicial review of deprivation of liberty after 48 hours, he wondered how many cases had been extended under the 72-hour rule on suspicion of a serious crime. He asked whether arrested persons had to choose between informing either a relative or a lawyer. He wondered whether all detainees

unconditionally had the right to consult a lawyer and a doctor from the onset of arrest and whether the doctors employed in the prison system also served in police stations, or whether persons in police custody were taken to a local medical centre or visited by a local doctor. He also wished to know whether the right to see a doctor applied both if detainees required treatment and if they wished to have a medical examination because they had been ill-treated or tortured.

31. He asked about the number of complaints in relation to police behaviour received annually, the average investigation time and the disciplinary or criminal sanctions imposed. He invited the delegation to comment on the independence of the judiciary, particularly in relation to the President and the Government. He asked for statistics on the number of asylum seekers who had been detained and how many asylum rejections had been overruled by an appeal procedure.

32. With regard to diplomatic guarantees, the Committee did not believe that it was possible to assess the presence or absence of torture in the manner in which it had been done in the case of Mr. Chentiev, described in the State party's written replies. Examination for torture required considerable forensic and psychological training and experience, which it must be assumed the embassy employees in the case in question did not have. In accordance with the Istanbul Protocol, the absence of physical evidence of torture could not be considered proof that torture had not occurred, as many methods of torture did not leave any traces. Similarly, Mr. Chentiev's statement that he was being well treated might have been coerced, and even if he had not been tortured, the torture could have begun as soon as the embassy employees had left. For those reasons, the Committee did not believe that diplomatic guarantees could be trusted.

33. **Mr. Tugushi** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would welcome clarification on the connection between the funding arrangements for the National Human Rights Centre and international treaty obligations. Noting that the Centre had come in for much criticism, particularly in relation to its composition, independence and effectiveness, he asked whether there were any plans to reform that institution. He wondered whether the fact that the State party was covered by the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment — and thus did not consider it necessary to accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture — was the only justification for non-ratification.

34. He wondered whether there had been any developments in terms of increasing the budget of the Office of the Ombudsperson, which claimed to be unable to carry out much monitoring of places of detention because of a lack of funds. Noting that the Criminal Code had been amended to make racial motivation an aggravating circumstance for a range of offences, he asked whether there were plans to make that generally applicable to all offences. He would be interested to know whether a written list of the basic rights of all detainees in multiple languages was provided to all individuals in police custody. He wondered what follow-up had been given to the recommendation by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment that detainees should not be handcuffed to wall fixtures in police establishments and that such fixtures should be removed. He asked whether it was the number of psychologists or psychiatrists employed in the prison system that had increased. He wished to know what was being done to ensure that minors were not questioned by the police in the absence of a lawyer or trusted person. Noting that Slovakia had been criticized for its light sentencing for trafficking offences, he asked what measures were being taken to ensure that sentences were commensurate with the gravity of the crime and how border guards were being trained to identify possible victims of trafficking.

35. **Ms. Belmir** expressed concern about the apparent lack of credibility of the justice system in terms of the handling of complaints and the treatment of witnesses and detainees, as well as the lack of independent oversight of police complaints and the high number of cases involving minorities, particularly the Roma. With regard to "erased persons", she wondered whether the State party considered the problem to have been resolved. Noting that the delegation had repeatedly referred to the Roma as "villagers", "persons at risk" and "a marginalized community", she asked whether that was how Roma people were perceived generally, rather than as integrated members of society.

36. **Mr. Bruni** asked what criteria were used in evaluating the effectiveness of the training on human rights and the prevention of torture provided to judicial personnel, and whether such training had resulted in a decrease in the number of cases of police brutality. Noting that, according to the State party's written replies, there were plans to expand the dimension of prison cells from the current 3.5 m^2 to the minimum acceptable size of 4 m^2, he asked what progress had been made in achieving that goal, particularly for prisoners serving long sentences or in solitary confinement.

37. **Ms. Gaer** asked whether the delegation could provide more information on the fate of the 10 policemen accused of abuse of power in Košice. She asked whether the Government would consider establishing an independent commission to examine the full extent of coerced and forced sterilization, particularly of Roma women, in the communist and post-communist periods. The delegation should indicate whether the Government would consider launching criminal investigations into cases of coerced or forced sterilization and pursuing criminal prosecutions where possible. More information should be provided on the systematic training of medical personnel to ensure that consent was received prior to medical procedures that might include sterilization, particularly in the case of Roma.

38. **The Chairperson** asked whether persons who had been accused of a crime were treated differently from persons who had been apprehended for a crime and at what point a person who had been accused or apprehended was permitted to contact a lawyer. He asked whether police officers were present during the medical examination of detainees and in what circumstances medical assistance was provided to detainees. The delegation should clarify whether diplomatic representatives were permitted to visit detainees from their countries. The delegation should comment on the value or otherwise of diplomatic assurances that a person would not be subjected to torture if returned to another State.

39. Information should be provided on investigations into the ill-treatment of detainees, including in the incident that had taken place in Leopoldov. The delegation should comment on the Government's view of inappropriate remarks about persons from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community made by public officials. He asked how many cases of trafficking in persons had been reported, investigated and had led to prosecutions.

The meeting was suspended at 5.25 p.m. and resumed at 5.35 p.m.

40. **Mr. Kadlečík** (Slovakia) said that torture or other ill-treatment committed by a police officer against another person on the basis of discrimination was punishable under section 420 of the Criminal Code. Anti-discrimination law also provided for liability in the case of discriminatory treatment. Monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty by the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights was undertaken in accordance with the competencies afforded the Ombudsman in the Constitution. In order to avoid the difficulties of undertaking constitutional change, other legal provisions could be applied to improve monitoring, such as provisions that permitted prosecutors to visit prisons and medical institutions where persons were deprived of their liberty.

41. Given that, in the case of Mr. Chentiev, the European Court of Human Rights had taken into account guarantees given to the Slovak authorities by the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation, the Slovak Government recognized the value of diplomatic assurances against torture or ill-treatment.

42. The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment had been translated into Slovak and brought to the attention of the public and legal experts. The Optional Protocol and the possibility of establishing a national preventive mechanism had been discussed at intersectoral meetings.

43. **Mr. Sedliak** (Slovakia) said that the number of psychiatrists working in prisons, either as direct employees or on a freelance basis, had increased. Complaints of ill-treatment of prisoners had decreased in 2014 compared to 2013 and the number of complaints that had been upheld had halved during that period. Prisoners serving long-term sentences were accommodated in cells of a minimum size of 6.5 m^2. Prison capacity was being increased through the extension and renovation of existing facilities and by building new facilities; all new or renovated cells would measure 4 m^2. Electronic monitoring of offenders was expected to reduce the numbers serving sentences in prison. The complaints of ill-treatment in Leopoldov had been investigated but could not be confirmed. Seven of the policemen involved in the Košice incident had been disciplined and two had left the police service.

44. **Mr. Csémi** (Slovakia) said that foreign detainees were entitled to contact a lawyer, their next of kin and embassy immediately following their arrest or apprehension. Those rights were enshrined in law and foreign detainees were informed of their rights in writing in a language that they understood. In prison facilities, information leaflets were available in 26 languages. Although data were not systematically collected on the number of asylum seekers apprehended, in 2014, 508 foreigners had been placed in detention, 331 of which had been asylum seekers.

45. Trafficking in persons was a priority area for the Slovak Government and was a criminal act punishable by between 4 and 10 years in prison. It remained difficult to collect good evidence from victims of trafficking, many of whom had difficulty withstanding the demanding legal process. His country had participated in regional training for police officers and had been involved in a European Union initiative to introduce training and a handbook for border guards on identifying victims of trafficking in persons.

46. **Mr. Mirek** (Slovakia) said that, unless a person who had been apprehended was not brought before the court, he or she could not be held by the police for more than 48 hours. No statistics were available on that period of detention since it could not be extended. Foreign detainees were required to sign a written declaration of their rights to confirm that they had read and understood the information provided, and could receive medical help, including emergency first aid, doctors' visits and an ambulance as required. Efforts were being made to address the problem of shackling prisoners to the wall and to ensure that the practice was used only in extreme cases.

47. Any situation where a minor or other person was interviewed by police without a lawyer present was a breach of the law and the interview would be considered inadmissible evidence in court. An accused person was a person who was suspected of having committed a criminal act. Once an accused person had been apprehended, he or she was placed in detention and immediately afforded the applicable legal rights.

48. **Mr. Matuškovič** (Slovakia) said that police behaviour and violence committed by the police against persons who had been accused or apprehended was monitored by the Ministry of Interior. The Control and Inspection Service was unable to take disciplinary action in cases of abuse perpetrated by members of the judiciary but

forwarded relevant information to the perpetrator's superiors. The Government intended to introduce interview rooms furnished with recording equipment in all units that conducted interviews, in order to prevent the ill-treatment of interviewees and protect police from fabricated claims.

49. **Mr. Hero** (Slovakia) said that steps had been taken to improve legislation on discrimination in education in response to the view of the European Commission that Slovak legislation on the equal treatment of Roma children, children from socially disadvantaged environments and children with special educational needs was inadequate.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.